GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:354
ANSWERED ON:28.02.2008
SMUGGLING OF ANTIQUES
Barman Shri Hiten

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware that priceless treasures like antique statues of Gods and Goddesses, invaluable sculptures are being regularly smuggled abroad under the garb of replicas in the country;

(b) if so, the number of such antiques smuggled so far, State-wise, during the last three years; and

(c) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to prevent theft and smuggling in the country

Answer

MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND CULTURE (SMT. AMBIKA SONI)

(a) The available data is not indicative of any regular smuggling of antiquities.

(b) The number of thefts of antiquities reported during the last three years from the centrally protected monuments, State-wise, is as follow:-

State	Year	No. of thefts of antiquities
Rajasthan	2005	7
Madhya Pradesh	2005	9
Uttarakhand	2006	2
Rajasthan	2006	1
Andhra Pradesh	2006	1
Madhya Pradesh	2007	5
West Bengal	2007	1
Himachal Pradesh	2007	4

(c) -2-The Archaeological Survey of India is fully committed towards the preservation and safety of antiquities at the protected monuments as well as the site museums. To ensure their safety, the Archaeological Survey of India engages security guards whose strength has been augmented by deploying private security guards, State police, home guards, and even the CISF at selected monuments. Constant interaction takes place between ASI, CBI and Customs, authorities to share information on the smuggling of art objects.Provisions exist under the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 for regulation of export in antiquities and art treasures and for prevention of their illicit trafficking. These provisions include registration of dealers, registration of specified categories of antiquities, prosecution of offenders etc. The Government has launched a National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities which will, among other things, document the country's monuments and antiquities.